

REMARKS

Claims 1-24 were pending.

Claims 1-24 have been canceled without prejudice. New claim 25 incorporates the limitations of claim 1 into claim 18. New claims 26-45 correspond to original claims 2-24, respectively, with minor corrections for grammar and clarity, and all depend from new claim 25. No new matter has been added.

Claims 25-45 are currently pending.

I. Rejections Based on 35 U.S.C. § 112, Second Paragraph

Claims 1-3 and 20 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as purportedly being indefinite. Claims 1-3 have herein been canceled without prejudice. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that these rejections are moot and should be withdrawn.

II. Provisional Double Patenting Rejections

Claims 1-17 and 19-24 have been provisionally rejected under the nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting doctrine as purportedly being unpatentable over claims 1-7 of U.S. Patent No. 6,864,223 in view of WO 98/28396.

Claims 1-16 and 18-24 have been provisionally rejected under the nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting doctrine as purportedly being unpatentable over claims 1-18 of copending U.S. Patent Application No. 10/694,196 in view of WO 98/28396.

Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 16 and 19-24 have been provisionally rejected under the nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting doctrine as purportedly being unpatentable over claim 8 of copending U.S. Patent Application No. 10/694,196 in view of WO 98/28396.

Because claims 1-24 have herein been canceled without prejudice, Applicants respectfully submit that these rejections are moot and should be withdrawn.

III. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1-17 and 19-24 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as purportedly being obvious based on U.S. Patent Application No. 2002/132749 to Smith et al. in view of WO 98/28936.

Because claims 1-17 and 24 have herein been canceled without prejudice, Applicants respectfully submit that these rejections are moot and should be withdrawn.

IV. Claim 18

Claim 18 has been rejected as dependent upon a rejected base claim, but has been indicated to be allowable if rewritten as an independent claim incorporating all of the limitations of claim 1.

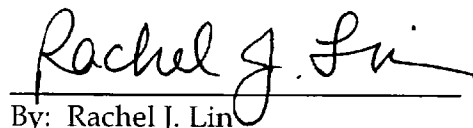
Claim 18 has been canceled without prejudice. New claim 25 corresponds to original claim 18 with the limitations of original claim 1 incorporated therein. Applicants respectfully submit that based on the Examiner's indication, claim 25 is allowable. Furthermore, claims 26-45 are also allowable because they depend from, and therefore include the limitations of, claim 25.

In light of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims are now in condition for allowance, early notice of which is earnestly solicited. Should any issues remain, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney at the telephone number below.

No fees, other than the fee for extension of time, are believed to be due for the filing of this Amendment and Response to Office Action. However, the Director is hereby authorized to charge any fees due, and credit any overpayments, to Deposit Account No. 03-2455.

Respectfully submitted,

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